

## ***Attributes of God***

The attributes of God are those things which make up His character. They are “characteristics or qualities that constitute God’s very being.”<sup>i</sup> All of His attributes are completely perfect in every way because He is God. In the gospel of Matthew a man came to Jesus and called Him “*Good Teacher*” (Matthew 19:16). Jesus was correct to point out that only God is good and by this, we know Jesus was God because He did not correct the man but simply told him that only God was good. Jesus Christ is God; so therefore, Jesus is the “*Good Teacher*.” God’s goodness covers all of His attributes. Goodness is the overriding theme in discussing the attributes of God. Everything He does is good.

In looking at God’s character, it can be divided essentially into two categories. First, there are the non-moral or non-communicable attributes. These would be the attributes that man cannot possess. The second category would be God’s moral or communicable attributes. These would be attributes that can be passed on to His creation. It is important to point out, however, that only God possesses these attributes in perfection, man does not.

Two of God’s moral attributes are those of His righteousness and holiness. Man does not naturally have these attributes. They can, however, be imputed to us because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. God’s righteousness is given to everyone that puts their faith in Christ. This is possible because of Christ’s faithfulness (Romans 3:22). We are given the holiness of God. Because of His finished work on the cross, we are seen as perfect and complete in Christ, not because of our own righteousness, but because of Christ’s righteousness.

The non-moral attributes of God are those attributes that man **cannot** possess. One of these attributes is omnipresence which means God is everywhere. This is not the same as saying “everything is God,” which is very pantheistic and therefore false. Charles Baker states, “Omnipresence means that God is present everywhere in the universe. This attribute has to do with the Immanence of God.”<sup>ii</sup> This means that God is present with creation and is actively involved with it. At the same time, however, He transcends creation and is above it, and not part of the creation. The Psalmist states God is everywhere and there is no place for man to go to hide from Him (Psalm 139:7-12). Nevertheless, since the time of Adam and Eve, man continually tries to hide from God, but to no avail (Genesis 3:9, 10).

God is also omnipotent which means He is all-powerful and can do whatever He wills. He has done what He said He would do, and He will do what He says. He can do almost anything. By this I mean there are certain things God cannot do because they would go against who He is. One example is lying. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He also cannot be tempted by evil or tempt someone with evil (James 1:13). God is also all-knowing and has unlimited knowledge and wisdom. This means He is omniscient. He knows the future and all scenarios that would play out if man made different choices. This is important to consider because there are those who believe God can only operate based on man’s decisions. Consider 1 Samuel 23:9-12. In this passage of Scripture, David asks the Lord what will happen to him if he stays in Keilah. God answered him and said the men of Keilah would deliver him into Saul’s hand. Because David had this information, he immediately escaped out of the city. David believed God knew all the scenarios that would happen in his life. As members of the Body of Christ, we can be confident of the same thing, and also that God knows the beginning from the end, and that “*all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28).

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<sup>i</sup> McKim, Donald. (Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms), Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. p. 21.

<sup>ii</sup> Baker, Charles. (A Dispensational Theology), Grand Rapids, MI: Grace Bible College Publications, 1971. p. 135.